

IN SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES,

JANUARY 7, 1824.

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Mr RUGGLES, from the Committee of Claims, to which was referred the petition of Charles B. Davis, of the City of Washington, made the following

REPORT:

That the petitioner states that, on the removal of the Seat of Government from Philadelphia to Washington, four buildings were erected at the public expense, as dwellings for the Messengers, contiguous to the Treasury, in order that their services might be promptly given in an event of the alarm of fire. The petitioner further states, that he was appointed a Messenger to the Auditor of the Treasury in the year 1810, and was directed to take charge of, and occupy one of said buildings. That, when war was declared, he attached himself to a volunteer company, commanded by Capt. Andrews, and performed duty in said company whenever ordered into service. That he marched in defence of the Metropolis on the 19th of August, 1814, leaving his family in said house; and that, when the public offices were burnt by the enemy, the buildings occupied by the Messengers were at the same time burnt, together with the furniture and wearing apparel belonging to the petitioner, amounting to three hundred dollars. The petitioner prays that Congress would indemnify him for his loss, by passing a law for that purpose.

The material allegations, above stated by the petitioner, are satisfactorily proved, by the evidence which has been submitted to the Committee.

The petitioner has also laid before the Committee, the affidavit of John N. Lovejoy, in which it is stated, that a cart and a two-horse wagon, which had been procured, before the entrance of the British into the city, for the purpose of conveying away the furniture of the Messengers, were impressed into the public service, before that object was completed, by means of which it became impracticable to remove any more of the furniture, and it was, therefore, consumed, together with the houses.

The Committee are of opinion, that the claim of the petitioner cannot be allowed. They have not been able to distinguish it from that class of cases, so numerous, which arose out of the wanton conduct of the enemy during the late war. No instances have occurred, in the recollection of the Committee, in which the capture or destruction of private property by the enemy has been paid for, unless such property was taken into the public service, either by contract or impressment. The following resolution is recommended:

*Resolved*, That the prayer of the petitioner ought not to be granted.

